

May 22 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1996

proud history will also be your future and the future of your children.

Good luck, and God bless you and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:34 a.m. at Nelson W. Churchill Field. In his remarks, he re-

ferred to Adm. Robert Kramek, Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard; Rear Adm. Paul E. Versaw, Superintendent, U.S. Coast Guard Academy; Commander R.O. Bill Wiemer, who gave the invocation; and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority.

## Remarks to Fleet Week Participants on Board the U.S.S. *Intrepid* in New York City

May 22, 1996

To the men and women of our Armed Forces gathered here today and their counterparts from Canada and Mexico and the United Kingdom who join us on board the *Intrepid*, first things first: At ease.

Mr. Sowinski, Secretary Dalton, Admiral Johnson, Admiral Flanagan, Rear Admiral Williamson, Mayor and Mrs. Giuliani. I am delighted to be here today. As your Commander in Chief, I've come to see you off on a challenging assignment, one that demands enormous stamina and strength: Fleet Week. A grueling schedule of baseball and theater awaits you, the seamanship olympics, the legendary best chow contests. Your abilities will be put to the test. Your orders for the mission are clear and simple: Enjoy yourselves. Have fun. You've earned it.

All around the world, every day of the year, you show what is best about our country: the commitment to stand up for freedom, to stand against oppression, to give a helping hand, to do all of that together as one America in alliance with our friends.

Among you are soldiers from the 77th Regional Support Command which helped to defeat Saddam Hussein in Desert Storm and now is working to preserve the peace in Bosnia. There are sailors from the U.S.S. *Arleigh Burke* which served as Red Crown in Operation Sharp Guard to protect our Adriatic fleet. There are airmen from McGuire Air Force Base who supported IFOR troops in Bosnia and evacuation airlifts in Liberia. There are coastguardsmen and women from Governors Island who rescued thousands of Haitians and Cubans seeking refuge on dangerous waters. There are marines from Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, who, not shyly, recently returned from Trinidad and Hon-

duras, where they helped to build schools and barracks. And there are citizen soldiers here from New York State who answered the call to action in the wake of recent snowstorms, floods, and fires.

I want all of you to know that America is proud of each and every one of you, grateful for all that you do. Your example explains why people around the world look to us for help and for inspiration.

I also want to say a special word of thanks to those who are here from other nations, for our partnership with our allies have provided us for some of the most important opportunities we have had in recent years to advance America's cause.

Let me say that I know the last few days have not been easy for our Armed Forces and especially for the United States Navy. We lost a great leader and friend in Admiral Boorda. But as we honor his service to our Nation, I ask you to be proud of your own achievements as well. You are members of the world's greatest military, whose values of honor, resolve, and integrity America respects so deeply. You protect our Nation on land, at sea, and in the skies. You project our strength and our values around the world. You stepped forward to serve your country. You do so with courage, commitment, and compassion every time America calls. We are grateful to you and grateful that you are the best trained, best equipped, best prepared fighting force on Earth. As long as I am your Commander in Chief, not only our gratitude but the reality of that statement will remain intact.

Your country and I thank you for everything you do. You have earned a week of celebration and now, liberty call.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:25 p.m. on the flight deck. In his remarks, he referred to Larry

Sowinski, executive director, *Intrepid* Sea-Air-Space Museum; Adm. W.J. Flanagan, Jr., USN, commander in chief, Atlantic Fleet; Rear Adm. Robert C. Williamson, USN, commander, Carrier Group 2; and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani of New York City and his wife, Donna.

## Remarks on Receiving the U.S.S. *Intrepid* Freedom Award in New York City

May 22, 1996

To tell you the truth, Zack, I thought it was a pretty good speech when you stopped. [Laughter]

Mayor and Mrs. Giuliani and members of your family—and I especially want to acknowledge the fact that in the Second World War, the mayor's father-in-law served here on the *Intrepid* and was a Navy man for 25 years. He and his wife are here. Secretary and Mrs. Dalton, Paul Tudor Jones and Max Chapman, Admiral Johnson, Admiral Flanagan, Admiral Williamson; to all the distinguished friends of the *Intrepid* Sea-Air-Space Museum who are here and who share this podium with me; and members of our Armed Forces and our allied forces in Canada, Mexico, and Great Britain. And let me say, as an old musician, I want to especially thank the Royal Marine Band from the United Kingdom. I thought they were quite wonderful. Thank you. There was a time in my life when I had committed to memory almost every important piece of British band music in the last 50 years, and so I am delighted to hear it from the horse's mouth, so to speak.

I thank the United States Marine Corps Honor Guard and the Joint Armed Color Team. And I want to thank all of you for being here today and for your support of the *Intrepid* and your support of our Armed Forces.

I am honored to receive this 1996 *Intrepid* Freedom Award, especially pleased to receive it in the company of two of the best friends of freedom this country ever had, Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher. And I thank them more than I can say.

Just a little over a year ago, it was my privilege to present Zachary Fisher with the President's Citizens Medal. It was a great honor for

me because of all the remarkable things that he has done. Most of you know what the Fishers have done for their extended family, the 2.6 million men and women of our Armed Forces and their loved ones. From the Fisher house program that provides a home away from home to the families of hospitalized military personnel to the Armed Forces Scholarship Foundation that has allowed hundreds of service men and women to attend college, few have done more for those who dedicate their lives to defending our freedom. So we thank them for their shining service to America.

Yesterday in Washington, in our Navy's hour of need, Zachary Fisher was there again. When I escorted Bettie Boorda out into the National Cathedral, he was there to sit beside her during that profoundly moving but difficult memorial service as we celebrated the life of Admiral Mike Boorda.

Mike Boorda will be remembered as the first enlisted man who ever became the Chief of Naval Operations. More than that, I think the men and women of the Navy knew that he was not only once an enlisted man, in his heart he always was. He never forgot that he was their man. I saw it in the tears that they shed yesterday by the hundreds in the cathedral. But if he were here today, he would flash his famous smile and tell a few sea stories and say to us, "This is still the greatest Navy in the world. America needs you to be the best you can be. Carry on."

Because of that spirit of "carry on," he would also be grateful, as I am, for the generosity and devotion that so many of you here today have shown when you have helped to transform this veteran of America's triumph over tyranny